



Illustration by John H. Rumely;
From 'Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest'

ASTER FRONDOSUS **ALKALI ASTER**

Alkali Aster is an annual with solitary, branched stems that are 5-60 cm high and arise from a taproot. The alternate, linear leaves have entire margins and are up to 6 cm long. Lower leaves have petioles, but become sessile higher up. Foliage is glabrous. Flower heads are borne in open, branched inflorescences arising from the leaf axils. Each flower head has 2-3 series of green, overlapping, lance-shaped involucral bracts that are 5-9 mm long. There are yellow disk flowers and numerous pinkish, filiform rays, that are 2-4 mm long. Each achene has a pappus consisting of numerous soft bristles on top that are longer than the disk flowers. Flowering in August-October.

This species is similar to the more common *ASTER BRACHYACTIS*, but the latter has rays that are less than 2 mm long or are lacking. *A. FRONDOSUS* might also be confused with *ERIGERON ACRIS* or *E. LONCHOPHYLLUS*, but they have only 1 main series of involucral bracts. A hand lens and technical key may be needed for positive identification.